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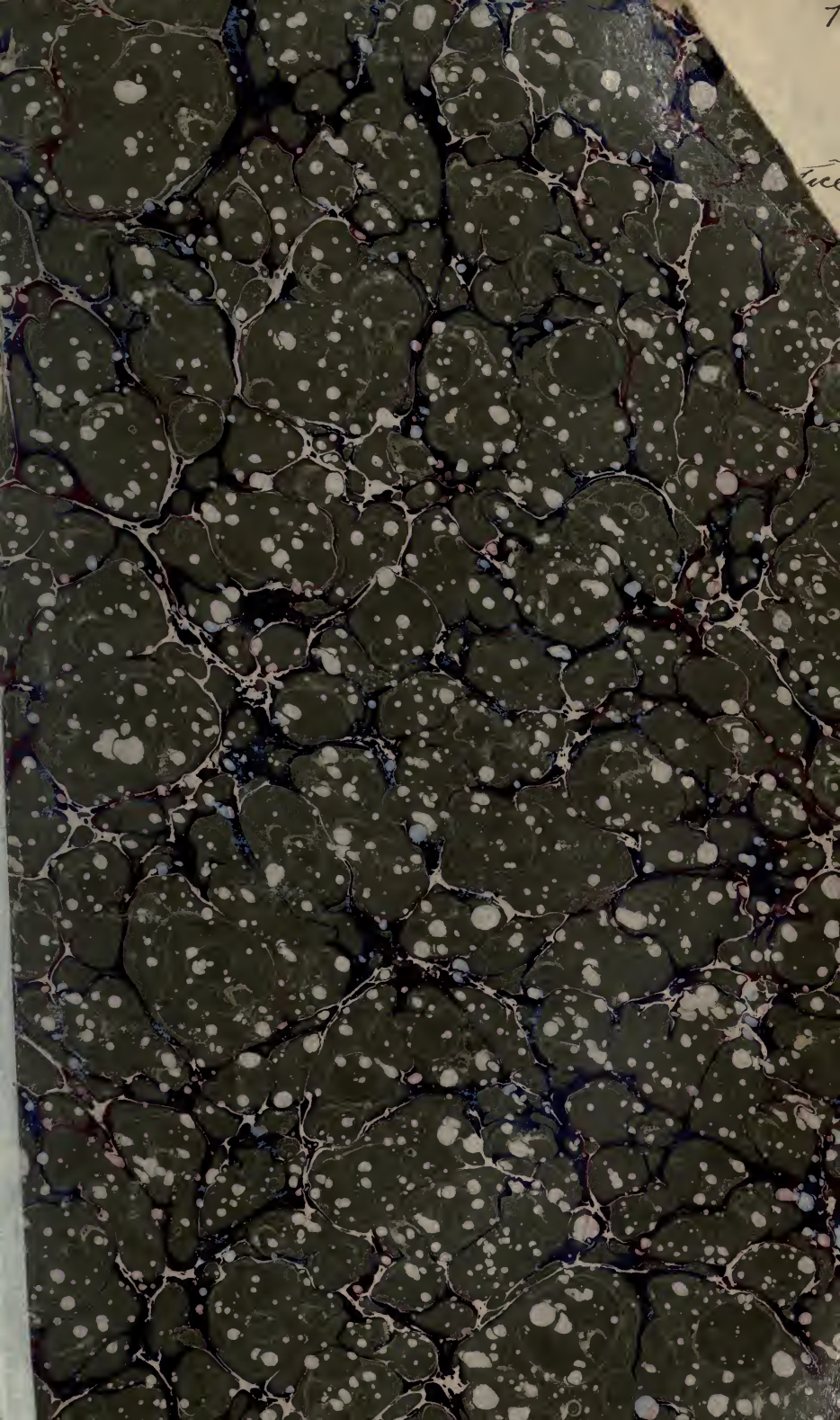

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The Owl Biddeth Good-bye to Bromley

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THUS SAITH THE OWL!

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All hail, Bromley !
All hail, Arch High-Priest of our realm of Bohemia !
All hail, Grand Too-Whit of the noble Order of the Ulula !

Thou hast found favor in my yellow eyes !
Thou hast gained lodgment in this ancient heart !
I have not dimmed my love by expressing it in words—I would not waste my love in words !
Nor have I shown it by my smiles ; I do not smile on those I love.
But thou has not mistaken me !

All hail, Immaly!
All hail, Arch High-Priest of our realm
of Bodoma!
All hail, Grand Too-Wit of the noble
Order of the Ulula!

Thou hast found favor in my yellow
eyes!
Thou hast gained lodgement in this
ancient heart!
I have not dimmed my love by express-
ing it in words—I would not waste
my love in words!
Nor have I shown it by my smiles; I
do not smile on those I love.
But thou has not mistaken me!

At thy approach my closed eyelids, weary with the fullness of surrounding emptiness, have opened wide. At sight of thee, the eager pupils of mine eyes have dilated till they were like to burst their broad circumferences. In thy presence, my protruded bosom hath expanded until each yearning feather stood on end.

Between thee and me neither word nor smile was needed.

Thou camest! I poured upon thee the refreshing flood of an approving and affectionate silence.

For years I have marked thee in thy daily walk; a kindly heart to whom all hearts must needs be kind; a cheerful spirit, quick to enjoy the sunshine, and to find it even among clouds; a genial soul, receiving the young with pleasant welcome and retaining the old, because the pleasant welcome hath grown into a permanent friendship.

And I have noted in thee that higher wisdom which is wise enough sometimes to stoop to folly. Thou art too wise to be forever wise!

True wisdom hath no grief! Look at me—I weep not! But the wisdom of men is sad and full of pain; it maketh the heart sick and the eyelids heavy. Therefore, is such wisdom in so far unwise, for grief and death are sworn allies!

Whatever else be folly, it is surely wise to be merry, and if much wisdom banish merriment, then is such wisdom a false friend.

Where now are the wise men of the ancient days?

I and mine hold merry feasts in their nameless tombs.

What they thought wisdom is now sport for children; what they deemed solemn worship is now idle mummery.

So in the never-ending cycles to come shall the jest of to-day become earnest and the earnest become jest, and the one be mistaken for the other.

Therefore, have I looked on with pleasure when thou hast led the revels of my Bohemian children. Thy unctuous voice hath always inspired their mirth; thy jovial face hath ever inflamed their laughter.

What they thought wisdom is now
open to children: what they
deemed folsom wisdom is now
idle mummery.

So in the never-ending cycles to come
shall the jest of to-day become
earnest and the earnest become jest,
and the one be mistaken for the
other.

Therefore, have I looked on with plea-
sure when thou hast led the revels
of my Bohemian children. Thy
merriness voice hath always inspired
their mirth; thy joyful face hath
ever mirrored their laughter.

I have seen thee, as High-Priest, guiding the young neophyte to the Bohemian altar, and leading his soul upward with such uttered precept as never neophyte heard before. I have listened when with strenuous voice thou hast brought in hoarse carols from the briny deep.

Often, for very sport, thou wouldst load up most grave and serious words with light and unaccustomed freight of meaning, and then, anon, wouldst dress some solemn thought in such gay frivolous garb of language, that men mistook it for a wanton.

Many the quips and jests which I have heard from thee, but I have noted that there was never malice behind thy humor, and never sting to mar the honey of thy wit.

And now, O best beloved of the Owl, the time draws near when we must part.

I break the silence of unnumbered years to say, "Farewell!"

But we shall meet again. Not soon perhaps, within these halls, nor in the busy hours of day. But in the quiet of the night, when sleep hath come, I and many a friend of former days shall visit thee in thy distant home and bless thy dreams!